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Letter dated 16 September 2003 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

You will recall that, following the withdrawal of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia, the Security Council endorsed my intention to establish the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Liberia (UNOL). That first United Nations post-conflict peace-building support office was established on 1 November 1997. It was tasked primarily with assisting the Government in consolidating peace following the election of President Charles Taylor in the July 1997 multiparty elections.

With the full support of the Security Council, UNOL facilitated the promotion of national reconciliation and good governance and helped mobilize international support for the implementation of reconstruction and development programmes. In the most recent period, UNOL worked to fulfil the terms of a revised mandate, approved by the Security Council on 23 April 2003 (see S/2003/469), which had been previously agreed with the Government of Liberia. Under the terms of that revised mandate, and in addition to its initial tasks, UNOL was to focus on assisting the Government of Liberia in addressing its expressed capacity needs in the areas of human rights and the conduct of elections, as well as on developing a peace-building strategy integrating political objectives, programme assistance and human rights considerations.

However, as the Security Council is aware, the peace-building efforts of UNOL were seriously hindered by the inability of the Government and opposition party leaders to resolve their differences over key issues of governance. Meanwhile, the promotion of national reconciliation was undermined by systematic abuses of human rights, the exclusion and harassment of political opponents and the absence of security sector reform. These elements contributed to the resumption of civil war in Liberia, prompting the international community to call on the warring parties to seek a negotiated settlement of the conflict.

On 8 July 2003, as fighting between Government forces and various warring factions intensified and humanitarian tragedy threatened, I informed the Security Council that I had decided to appoint Jacques Paul Klein my Special Representative for Liberia (see S/2003/695). He was entrusted with the task of coordinating the activities of the United Nations agencies in Liberia and supporting the emerging transitional arrangements. In a further letter to your predecessor, of 29 July 2003, I outlined a three-phased deployment of international troops to Liberia, leading to a multidimensional United Nations peacekeeping operation (see S/2003/769). I also

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indicated that, in view of the appointment of Mr. Klein, and the envisaged establishment of a United Nations operation in Liberia, the mandate of UNOL would naturally have to be terminated.

Since that time the situation in Liberia has developed rapidly. On 1 August 2003 the Security Council adopted resolution 1497 (2003), authorizing the establishment of a multinational force in Liberia and declaring its readiness to establish a follow-on United Nations stabilization force to be deployed no later than 1 October 2003. Moreover, as the Council is aware, on 18 August 2003 the Liberian parties signed a Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Accra. By that Agreement, the parties requested the United Nations to deploy a force to Liberia under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations to support the National Transitional Government of Liberia and assist in the implementation of the Agreement. With the subsequent deployment of the Economic Community of West African States Mission in Liberia, the security situation in the country has improved.

In the light of these developments, and as we prepare for the establishment of a United Nations mission in Liberia, as envisaged under resolution 1497 (2003), I have decided to terminate the mandate of UNOL. It is my intention to bring to a close the operations of the Peace-building Office as soon as the Security Council authorizes the deployment of the proposed peacekeeping mission. As indicated in my current report on Liberia before the Council (S/2003/875 of 11 September 2003), the major functions performed by UNOL will be transferred to the new United Nations operation in Liberia, together with staff of the Office, as appropriate.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**